

St Patrick's N.S
Baconstown
Enfield
Co. Meath
Tel : 046 9541115
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Critical Incident Policy

Updated September 2015

St Patrick's National School, Baconstown aims to protect the well being of its students by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. The aim of Baconstown N.S is to provide a Christian caring environment for the children and ensuring the well being of the children in our care.

Baconstown N.S has taken a number of measures to create a coping, supportive and caring ethos in the school. The school has to date and will continue to formulate a number of policies with a view to ensuring the physical and psychological safety of staff and students, both in ordinary time and in the event of a critical incident.

What is a critical incident?

Baconstown N.S recognises a critical incident to be 'an incident or sequence of events that overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school and disrupts the running of the school'*. Critical incidents may involve one or more pupils, staff, the school, or our local community. Types of incidents might include;

- The death of a member of the school community through sudden death, accident, terminal illness or suicide.
- An intrusion into the school.
- An accident/ tragedy in the wider school community.
- Serious damage to the school building through fire, flood, vandalism etc.
- The disappearance of a member of the school community.
- An accident involving a member of the school community.

Aim

Recognising that the key to managing critical incidents is through planning, Baconstown N.S. has developed this Critical Incident Management Policy and accompanying Plan. Our hope is that, in the event of an incident, these will help staff to react quickly and effectively and to maintain a sense of control. They should also help us to achieve a return to normality as soon as possible and ensure that the effects on the students and staff will be limited.

Critical Incident Management Team

Baconstown N.S has set up a C I Management team in line with best practise** and will maintain this team in the future. The team members were selected on a voluntary basis and will retain their roles for at least one school year. The members of the team will meet once a year to review and update this plan. Each member of the team will have access to the schools Ready to Go Pack with relevant materials to be used in the event of an incident.

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Critical Incident Team:

Team Leader	Mr Gerry O'Donnell
Child Liaison	Mrs C Flynn, Ms E Bushe
Staff Liaison	Ms Noeleen Lynam
Parent Liaison	Mr Gerry O'Donnell
Administration	Mr Gerry O'Donnell, Ms Carol Corbett.

Record Keeping

In the event of a critical incident each member of the team will keep records of the following;

- Phone calls made and received.
- Letters sent and received.
- Meetings held.
- Persons met.
- Interventions used, materials etc.

The school secretary Carol Corbett, will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters, photocopying materials and resources, etc.

Letter to Parents

The media team will prepare a brief, written statement to include:

- The sympathy of the school community for the affected/ bereaved family.
- Positive information or comments about the deceased/ injured person(s).
- The facts of the incident.
- What has been done.
- What is going to be done.

Confidentiality and good name considerations

The school has a responsibility to protect the privacy and good name of the people involved in any incident and will be sensitive to the consequences of any public statements. The members of the school staff will bear this in mind, and will try to ensure that pupils do so also, [for example, the term suicide will not be used without the consent of the family involved or until it has been established categorically that the person's death was a result of suicide. The phrases 'tragic death' and 'sudden death' should be used instead.]

Critical incident Room.

In the event of a critical incident, the staff room will become the main room used to meet the staff, students, parents and visitors involved.

Development and Communication of this policy and plan

- All staff members were consulted in the preparation of the draft plan. Our school's final policy and procedures for responding to critical incidents has been presented to all staff.

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- Each member of the critical incident team has a personal copy.
- All new and temporary staff will be informed of the details of the plan by Noeleen Lynam.
- This plan will be presented and ratified by the Board of Management.

References

* responding to Critical Incidents in Schools- National Educational Psychological Services NEPS.

** A critical incident team "is a group of individuals from the staff of the school who know the community, the students and each other well enough to make the necessary decisions called for when an incident occurs" – source Mary Schoenfeldt.